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## Media Release

### **AIA Australia and The Forktree Project plant the seeds of change**

*Life, health and wellbeing insurer joins Tim Jarvis AM in fight against climate emergency*

**Fleurieu Peninsula, South Australia, 28 July 2022** – Taking another step in its mission to make Australia the healthiest and best protected nation in the world, AIA Australia has hosted a tree-planting working bee ahead of National Tree Day in partnership with The Forktree Project – a not-for-profit biodiversity initiative founded by environmental scientist, Tim Jarvis AM.

Hosted on the site of a former degraded 133-acre former pastoral property on the Fleurieu Peninsula, CEO of AIA Australia, Damien Mu, joined Mr Jarvis, an AIA Vitality Ambassador, and other guests for a day of rewilding.

The Forktree Project was founded in 2019 and in recent years its vision has started to come to life. In undertaking the re-establishment of tens of thousands of native trees and shrubs on the property, Mr Jarvis hopes to sequester thousands of tonnes of carbon and encourage the return of native animals, birds and insects to the property.

AIA Australia's partnership with The Forktree Project commenced in 2021 after the insurer became inspired by the valuable work taking place on the property. Mr Jarvis has since supported AIA in its efforts to highlight the vital need to improve the health of the environment – a key risk factor impacting human health.

In July 2022, AIA Australia released its report '[The Environment and our Health](#)' which expanded upon its [5590+ report](#) and addresses the intrinsic link between human wellbeing and the health of the environment. The report has called for a focus on both individual actions and collective efforts that can bring about positive environmental change.

Globally, 12 million deaths (almost a quarter of all annual deaths) are linked to the environment. Nearly two-thirds of these are linked to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancer, diabetes, respiratory and heart diseases and mental ill-health. Environmental factors such as climate change, air pollution and food production are risk factors for NCDs which cause over 90 per cent of mostly preventable deaths in Australia each year.

Based on the estimation that planting one trillion trees globally could arrest the effects of climate change, and with Australia constituting one of six nations that represent 50 percent of the reforestation opportunity, Mr Mu, said tree planting was an important part of the insurer's local Environmental, Social and Governance strategy.

"At AIA Australia we're committed to helping people live healthier, longer, better lives. As a life and health insurer, we're concerned about the prevalence of chronic health conditions and their impact on our customers and the broader community.

"While awareness of climate change is increasing, the link between the environment and our health needs further attention. We're determined to highlight this connection and help our society rethink how it interacts with the environment, for the better.

"Our partnership with The Forktree Project is a tangible way of bringing our shared value vision to life. By supporting this incredible charity, we hope to educate and encourage all Australians to focus on the small 'somethings' they can do for the benefit of our environment."

AIA Vitality Ambassador and environmentalist, Mr Jarvis echoed Mr Mu's comments and said that partnering with organisations like AIA was critical in furthering pragmatic solutions to major environmental issues related to climate change and biodiversity loss.

“The Forktree Project involves reforesting an area of degraded farmland to show what is possible in terms of land restoration and carbon offsetting and ultimately how powerful collective action can be,” said Jarvis.

“Our mission is not only to plant trees, but to educate Australians about how a sustainable life can benefit the environment. I’m pleased that through my role as an AIA Vitality Ambassador, I can also highlight how this links to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.” he added.

Members of AIA’s health and wellbeing program, AIA Vitality can donate directly to The Forktree Project weekly using their \$5 Active Benefits rewards. From 1 - 28 August, AIA Vitality members can elect to donate their weekly Active Benefit to The Forktree Project, and AIA Vitality will match donations up to \$2000.

Donations from AIA Vitality members, as well as AIA Australia, have contributed to the planting of thousands of trees on the property – a testament to what can be achieved by a group of like-minded and passionate people.

For cover that cares about you and the things you care about, members who join AIA Health Insurance between 1-31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 will receive a premium refund and can have a donation made to The Forktree Project on their behalf.

*\*Members who join AIA Health on an eligible combined Hospital and Extras policy before 31 August 2022 will receive a 4-week premium refund from 31 November. And as part of our ongoing commitment to giving back to the community, we’ll donate 2-weeks’ worth of their insurance premiums to their choice of one of the following charities – Black Dog Institute, Cancer Council, Diabetes Australia and Forktree. Terms and conditions apply.*

**- ENDS -**

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#### About The Forktree Project

The Forktree Project is a registered charity whose goal is to return a degraded 133-acre former pastoral property in South Australia’s Fleurieu Peninsula back to nature. This involves re-establishing tens of thousands of native trees and shrubs on the property, which will in turn bring back native animals, insects and birds as well as sequester tens of thousands of tonnes of carbon. To put it in perspective, the average Australian’s carbon footprint each year is roughly 25 tonnes.

#### About AIA Australia

AIA Australia is a leading life insurance specialist with 50 years’ experience and a commitment to help Australians live healthier, longer, better lives. In 2014 the company launched AIA Vitality, a world leading, science-based health and wellbeing program, to the Australian market. In July 2017, AIA and its partners launched AIA’s health insurance business, now known as AIA Health Insurance.

In 2021, ComInsure Life was integrated into AIA Australia. The lives of more than 3.8 million Australians are protected and enhanced through AIA Australia’s unique value proposition of life, health and wellbeing. Our vision is to embrace shared value in championing Australia to be the healthiest and best protected nation in the world.

AIA Australia has been recognised with multiple awards, including the Women in Finance Employer of the Year Award (2018, 2019), Super Review’s Best Insurer of the Year (2018, 2019), FSC Life Insurance Industry Awards Innovation in Group Life Insurance (2021), Shared Value Awards Corporate Organisation Leading Through Shared Value (2019), Shared Value Awards Organisation of the Year (2020) and Shared Value Project of the Year (2021).

Further information at [www.aia.com.au](http://www.aia.com.au).

### AIA Australia's 5590+ report

In the second half of last year, AIA Australia released its 5590+ report which highlights how five individually modifiable behavioural factors – physical inactivity, poor nutrition, smoking, excess alcohol, and our interaction with the environment – lead to five major non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – cancer, diabetes, respiratory disease, cardiovascular diseases, and mental health conditions and disorders – which are responsible for over 90 per cent of deaths in Australia. As part of its work to address the prevalence of these mostly preventable diseases, AIA Australia wants to empower Aussies to introduce some small somethings to help reduce their risk of chronic illness.

To read more visit: <https://www.aia.com.au/content/dam/au/en/docs/reports/5590-report.pdf>

### AIA Australia's 'The Environment and Our Health' report

In July 2022, AIA Australia released its new report, titled 'The Environment and Our Health'. The report builds on the 5590+ report and summarises existing evidence and scientific literature, highlighting the bidirectional connection between our health and environmental factors such as air pollution and climate change.

By raising awareness of the environment-health connection, the insurer hopes to empower collective action and innovative solutions that will lead to positive outcomes for all people and the planet.

The insights from "The Environment and Our Health" have been incorporated into AIA Australia's wellbeing strategy, as highlighted in its 5590+ framework.

For more information on the research linking the environment and its impact on non-communicable diseases, please see the full report <https://www.aia.com.au/content/dam/au/en/docs/reports/the-environment-and-our-health.pdf>.

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